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Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 IO-14 ACDA-19 OMB-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06

SIL-01 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /153 W
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R 091607Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0201
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY
AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, U. K. (N. I.)
SUBJECT: SURPRISE - PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS LAUNCH
NEW PARTY

FOLLOWING TRANSMITTED BY CONSULATE GENERAL BELFAST:

BEGIN SUMMARY PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS ANNOUNCED MAY 4
THEIR LONG-EXPECTED DECISION TO LAUNCH NEW "UNIONIST
PARTY" TO BACK UNION WITH UK, CONSTITUTION ACT,
POWER-SHARING AND COOPERATION WITH IRISH REPUBLIC.
ANNOUNCEMENT OPPOSED LOYALIST PROPOSALS FOR FEDERAL UK
AS "HALF-WAY HOUSE TO INDEPENDENCE". NEW PARTY WILL
NOT AFFILIATE TO CONSERVATIVES OR ORANGE INSTITUTIONS,
AND WILL SEEK NI TRADE UNION AND CATHOLIC SUPPORT. IT
WILL FIGHT JUNE 6 ASSEMBLY BYE-ELECTION IN ANTRIM NORTH.
HARRY WEST'S UNIONISTS WERE GLAD FAULKNER LEFT PARTY,
BUT ANGRY HE WAS TAKING UNIONIST LABEL WITH HIM.
FIFTEEN PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST ASSEMBLYMEN JOINED WITH
FAULKNER IN LAUNCHING NEW PARTY, ASSURING EXECUTIVE OF
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CONTINUING MAJORITY IN ASSEMBLY. BUT FAULKNER'S RIVAL,

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ROY BRADFORD, WAS NOT INVOLVED IN DECISION, AND HIS ATTITUDE AND CONDUCT IN NEXT FEW DAYS WILL BE WATCHED ANXIOUSLY BY FAULKNERITES AND OTHER SUNNINGDALE BACKERS. END SUMMARY

1. AFTER TWO-DAY CONFERENCE OF PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST ASSEMBLYMEN AND OTHER SYMPATHISERS AT PORTSTEWART, CHIEF EXECUTIVE BRIAN FAULKNER ANNOUNCED MAY 4 A DECISION TO FORM NEW "UNIONIST PARTY" TO BACK UNION WITH UK, CONSTITUTION ACT, POWER-SHARING AND COOPERATION WITH IRISH REPUBLIC. ANNOUNCEMENT MARKS LONG-ANTICIPATED FORMAL BREAK WITH ULSTER UNIONIST PARTY LED BY HARRY WEST.

2. FAULKNER SAID DECISION HAD BEEN PRECIPITATED BY PORTRUSH CONFERENCE OF ULSTER UNITED UNIONIST COUNCIL AT WHICH WEST'S ULSTER UNIONISTS HAD AGREED ON POLICY OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT FOR NI WITHIN FEDERAL UK AND CONTACTS WITH WELSH AND SCOT NATIONALISTS TO ACHIEVE IT. FEDERAL UK, SAID FAULKNER, WOULD BE "HALF-WAY HOUSE TO INDEPENDENCE" AND THEREFORE INCOMPATIBLE WITH PRINCIPLES OF UNIONISM.

3. AT PRESS CONFERENCE MAY 6 SEVERAL PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST MINISTERS SAID PARTY WILL FIGHT JUNE 6 ASSEMBLY BYE-ELECTION IN ANTRIM NORTH; WILL NOT AFFILIATE FORMALLY WITH BRITISH CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND HOPES TO ATTRACT NI TRADE UNIONISTS; WILL NOT HAVE PARTY COUNCIL (LIKE ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL) SECOND-GUESSING LEADERSHIP; WILL HAVE NO FORMAL LINKS WITH ORANGE INSTITUTIONS; WILL NOT MERGE WITH ALLIANCE PARTY BUT HOPES TO ATTRACT SOME OF ITS SUPPORTERS; AND HOPES TO ATTRACT ROMAN CATHOLICS WHO SUPPORT UNION WITH UK. PARTY FAVORS EXTRADITION AS MEANS OF DEALING WITH FUGITIVE OFFENDERS, AND WILL STUDY LAW COMMISSION REPORT WHEN IT IS PUBLISHED.

4. HARRY WEST'S ULSTER UNIONISTS WELCOMED FAULKNERITE SPLIT, BUT WERE OUTRAGED THAT HE WAS STILL USING "UNIONIST" LABEL IN VIEW OF HIS ASSOCIATIONS WITH

REPUBLICANS IN SDLP. ULSTER UNIONISTS WILL SET UP CONSTITUENCY ASSOCIATIONS IN DIVISIONS WHICH GO OVER TO FAULKNER. WEST CALLED FOR NEW ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. (UNIONIST) NEWS LETTER REGRETTED FAULKNER HAD SPLIT UNIONISM AND THOUGHT NEW PARTY WOULD GET NOWHERE WITH PRO-SUNNINGDALE POLICY, ALTHOUGH POWER-SHARING WAS GOOD THING.

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5. FIFTEEN PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST ASSEMBLYMEN ASSOCIATED THEMSELVES WITH FAULKNER IN DECISION TO LAUNCH NEW PARTY. (ALTHOUGH FAULKNER'S IS NOW ONLY SECOND LARGEST ASSEMBLY PARTY IN EXECUTIVE COALITION, EXECUTIVE STILL HAS CLEAR MAJORITY IN ASSEMBLY.) THREE ADDITIONAL BACK-BENCHERS -- MORGAN, WHITTEN AND STRONGE -- DID NOT ATTEND CONFERENCE AND WILL NOT JOIN NEW

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PARTY, THOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THEY WILL GO ALL THE WAY OVER TO UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST ASSEMBLY COALITION (OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS, AND VANGUARD UNIONISTS). BIG PUZZLE IS ATTITUDE OF PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONIST ENVIRONMENT MINISTER ROY BRADFORD, WHO WAS ABSENT FROM PORTSTEWART DUE TO SUDDEN OFFICIAL BUSINESS IN BRUSSELS, AND EXPRESSED "SURPRISE" AT FORMATION OF NEW PARTY ON HIS RETURN TO BELFAST.

6. COMMENTS:
A. FAULKNER'S CHARGE THAT FEDERAL UK IS HALF-WAY

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HOUSE TO INDEPENDENCE IS ABSURD. AND HAVING COLLABORATED WITH REPUBLICANS IN EXECUTIVE, HE IS IN POOR POSITION TO ATTACK UNITED UNIONISTS FOR PROPOSED COLLABORATION WITH SCOT NATS AND PLAID CYMRU IN EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT KILBRANDON. HIS PURPOSE WAS TO FIND PRETEXT FOR LAUNCHING NEW PARTY WITH PLAUSIBLE CLAIM TO MANTLE OF UNIONIST TRADITION. LAUNCHING HAS BEEN PLANNED FOR MONTHS, AND PARTY'S PROSPECTS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN IMPROVED BY STILL FURTHER DELAY.
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B. FAULKNER'S SUCCESS IN BRINGING MOST BACKBENCHERS WITH HIM INSURES EXECUTIVE FOR THE TIME BEING AGAINST DEFEAT IN ASSEMBLY, REFLECTS GENUINE SUPPORT IN HIS PARTY AND IN COUNTRY FOR POWER-SHARING AND COOPERATION WITH IRISH REPUBLIC, AND THEREFORE GIVES SOME ENCOURAGEMENT TO SUNNINGDALE BACKERS.
C. BRADFORD SEES FAULKNER'S POLITICAL DEMISE AS NOT TOO FAR IN FUTURE, AND HOPES TO BECOME UNIONIST LEADER THEREAFTER. HE HAS TAKEN INDEPENDENT AND RATHER HARD LINE ON SUNNINGDALE MATTERS. HE HAS LONG FELT IT WAS MISTAKE NOT TO HAVE LOYALISTS AT SUNNINGDALE AND WORSE NOT TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THEIR SENTIMENTS AS EXPRESSED IN FEBRUARY 28 ELECTION. HIS ABSENCE FROM PORTSTEWART MEETING WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY DELIBERATE. HIS "SURPRISE" AT FORMATION OF PARTY IS IMPLAUSIBLE. BRADFORD'S CONDUCT IN NEXT FEW DAYS WILL BE WATCHED ANXIOUSLY BY FAULKNERITES AND OTHER SUNNINGDALE SUPPORTERS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON05757
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740113-0295
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740561/aaaaccsj.tel
Line Count: 204
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <30-Jul-2001 by phillir0>; APPROVED <11 JUN 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SURPRISE - PRO-ASSEMBLY UNIONISTS LAUNCH NEW PARTY
TAGS: PINT, UK, (N I)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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